

BUS & COACH BUYER

26 SEPTEMBER 1997 | ISSUE 428

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE!



Our new build programme is now underway for 1998 - and new orders are already being

placed. Ring, write or fax for full details. A limited number of 1997 built vehicles are also available with both Mercedes and MAN engine configurations, as well as seating capacities. Again, contact us for more details.

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Justin Shuttleworth (Sales Representative)

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VOLVOS

- 1995 N VOLVO B6 WRIGHTS CRUSADER SERVICE BUS**, 35 seats, 10 standing, large off side luggage pen, fully auto, low floor, choice of 2£59,500
- 1994 L VOLVO B6 PLAXTON POINTER SERVICE BUSES**, 29 seats, 2 large luggage pens.....Choice of 2 £39,500
- 1991 H VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 310 BHP INTERCOOLER**, 53/57 reclining seats, ZF fully auto transmission, Pannier lockers, double glazed, blinds, POD, radio/pa, belts, choice.....£62,500
- 1990 VOLVO B10M MARK III GL JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE**, 51 recliners, courier seat, rear demountable sunken toilet/continental door, new test, d/glazed, radio/PA, new test, repainted white£76,000 £72,500
- 1989 F VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE H**, 49 reclining seats, courier, centre demountable toilet/continental door, d/glazed, Telma, blinds, radio / PA, etc. £65,000
- 1988 PP VOLVO B9M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200**, 41 reclining seats, radio/PA, absolutely mint condition.....£57,500
- 1988 F VOLVO B9M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200**, 35 reclining seats, 2 tables, Pannier lockers, radio/pa, retrimmed + repainted white, choice.....£57,500
- 1988 E VOLVO B10 M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200**, 53 rec. seats, Telma, D/Glazing, Radio, P.A. new test£54,000
- 1986 PP VOLVO B10M VANHOOL SH**, full kitchen rear including full servery, 2 sinks, fridge, microwave, 28 reclining seats with tables, toilet, 5.5 generator, TV + video£47,500
- 1986 PP VOLVO B10M VANHOOL ALIZEE DH**, 49 reclining retrimmed seats, floor mounted toilet continental door, Telma, radio/PA/TV, belts.....£52,500
- 1986 C VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE**, 53 reclining seats, courier, continental door, radio/PA, new test£35,000

- 1985 C VOLVO B9M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200**, 43 retrimmed seats, repainted and painted white, new test, choice£42,500
- 1982 VOLVO B10 PLAXTON VIEWMASTER G.T** 51 rec seats + rear toilet, radio P.A£15,000
- 1981 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL**, 55 seats + courier, Telma, splitter, radio/PA£25,000

OTHERS

- 1989 LEYLAND SWIFT REEVE BURGESS HARRIER**, 33 reclining Fainsa seats, courier seat, rack lighting, forced air, curtains, radio/PA, power door, rear locker£24,500
- 1989 F LEYLAND TIGER 260 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500** manual. 53 rec seats, courier, D.G.radio, P.A, exceptional.£42,500
- 1988 E LEYLAND SWIFT WADHAM STRINGER VANGUARD II 7.6 wide**, 37 bus seats, auto, telma, new test.....£18,000 £15,000
- 1987 LAG PANORAMIC**, 49 retrimmed reclining seats, courier seat, centre toilet with continental door, d/glazed, Telma, radio/PA, repainted white£42,500
- 1986 LEYLAND TIGER 245, PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500**, 53 rec. seats, courier, cont. door. Semi auto, radio P.A.£24,500
- 1984 BEDFORD NJM WADHAM STRINGER VANGUARD**, Ratcliffe side lift, low mileage.....£2,500
- 1982 BEDFORD PJK 330 DUPE DOMINANT**, 29 retrimmed seats, POD, clean£4,000
- 1982 LEYLAND TIGER 218 PLAXTON SUPREME EXPRESS**, Express doors, 53 seater, Manual, radio P.A£12,500

QUALITY COACHES REQUIRED FOR CASH

A surreal landscape with a bright yellow sun, a white road, and a white car. The sun is a large, glowing orb in the upper center, casting a strong light. Below it, a white road curves through a hazy, orange-tinted landscape. A white car is visible on the road, moving towards the horizon. The overall color palette is dominated by warm tones of yellow, orange, and red.

*The future
is now...*

Catalan

More than you thought for less than you think.



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Front Cover: Crest Conversions is introducing more attractive frontal styling on its Impala Midicoach.

News

UniTec centre open in November

Optare's aftersales and service division, UniTec, is to open its new £2m bus, coach and commercial vehicle repair and maintenance facility in November. Based at Hellaby Lane, Rotherham, adjacent to Junction 1 of the M18 Motorway, the new facility will house everything for

full repair, maintenance and paint services. Also included will be a Class 5 PSV/HGV MOT test centre and calibration services for speed limiters and tachographs. The centre is to be open seven days a week from January 1998.

Autobus, Optare's small

coach building division, is also to be housed in the new centre which additionally takes on the mantle of bus repair work that is currently undertaken at the Leeds manufacturing plant. Operators wishing to discuss the new facilities should contact Peter Hale on 01132 645182.

Go-Ahead profits announced

Preliminary results to the year ended 28 June indicate Go-Ahead Group has made pre tax profits up 81% to £21.5m. The figure is based on increased turnover (125%) to £304m and adjusted earnings per share are placed at 38.8p, up 68% which has allowed the board to declare a final dividend of 5.85p. This makes an overall 8p for the year and is a rise of 44%. The results have allowed gearing to be reduced from 240% to 45% and interest charges of £2.4m were covered by operating profit 9.8 times. The group is committed to acquiring 183 new buses and coaches and its rail division is experiencing passenger revenue growth above 12% at constant prices.

Much of the increase in turnover came from GAG's acquisition of the Thames Trains and Thameslink rail franchises which contributed £111m, yielding £4.7m in profit before exceptionals. The operating profit for bus operations was £24.5m before

exceptionals and represents an operating margin of 12.7%, and moving towards the target of 15%. Last year it was just 10.5%.

GAG's chairman, Sir Michael Straker, emphasised the need to achieve 15% operating margins, in his summing up, in order for operators to sustain the re-investment necessary to develop their businesses. But he also warned that unless it became achievable and sustainable many of the exciting

improvements in urban public transport would be difficult to deliver. He was delighted that GAG now had a real opportunity to offer integration between bus and rail services but attacked the Government for its continued imposition of cost increases which he claimed were out of step with the current mood. In conclusion, he welcomed Sir Fred Holliday to the board of GAG as a non-executive director, alongside Duncan Clegg and himself.



One of the Oxford Bus Company's new Plaxton Pointer bodied Dennis Dart SLFs in service at High Wycombe.

TAS survey suggests deregulating local authorities

The recently conducted review of current Quality Partnerships, undertaken by TAS, which traces the development of the schemes through the Special Funding Initiative and Package Bids, suggests a possible need to deregulate local authority dealings with the industry rather than re-regulate the bus industry. The review considered schemes which had failed as well as those that had been successful and took the views of all concerned into consideration.

Figures showed 42% of authorities and 58% of bus operators said Quality Partnerships worked well. However, 44% of authorities

and 20% of operators believed progress was retarded by the absence of clear guidance and rules from the Government. Operators' worst problems were abstraction by low quality competition (77%), restrictions on local authority funds (58%) and problems securing traffic priority (29%). Local authorities cited the lack of formal structure or commitment (62%), pressure on scheme finance (43%) and low quality competition (34%). Some 14% of authorities and 22% of operators expressed doubts on the legal enforceability of what they were doing.

TAS found the success of Quality Partnerships came in

three distinct bands: schemes with no specific priority or infrastructure experienced around 5% growth in passengers; average schemes saw around 20%; and where facilities had been considerably enhanced it was possible to achieve above 40%. TAS concludes that the 1985 Transport Act contains prescriptive legislation which acts as a barrier to local authorities by compartmentalising spending. This stops them negotiating funding packages with their operators which include whatever levels of fares subvention, service levels, network ticketing, quality thresholds, bus priority and promotion they feel appropriate.

Quality Hallmark.

For companies like Hallmark the Optimo range from Toyota has become the gold standard for midi-coaches. Every year the letter on the Hallmark coaches changes as they replace their older Optimo models with newer designs. This year it's the Optimo IV, with even more precious metal in the shape of a new 4.1 litre turbo-charged engine. For reassurance and comfort there are also new wider seats, all of which have seat belts. To find out why the Optimo IV is such a sound investment for the future, call Steve Prime at Toyota, on 01737 768 585. It's the marque of quality.

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For more information please contact Steve Prime, Coach Sales Manager, Toyota (GB) Ltd., The Quadrangle, Redhill, Surrey RH1 1PX. Tel. 01737 768 585. Erringtons of Evington, Leicester: Tel. 0116 273 0421. Regal Coach Sales, Glasgow. Tel. 0141 776 3268. AD Coach Sales, Devon. Tel. 01884 860767. Salvador Caetano (UK) Ltd., Heather. Tel. 01530 263 333.

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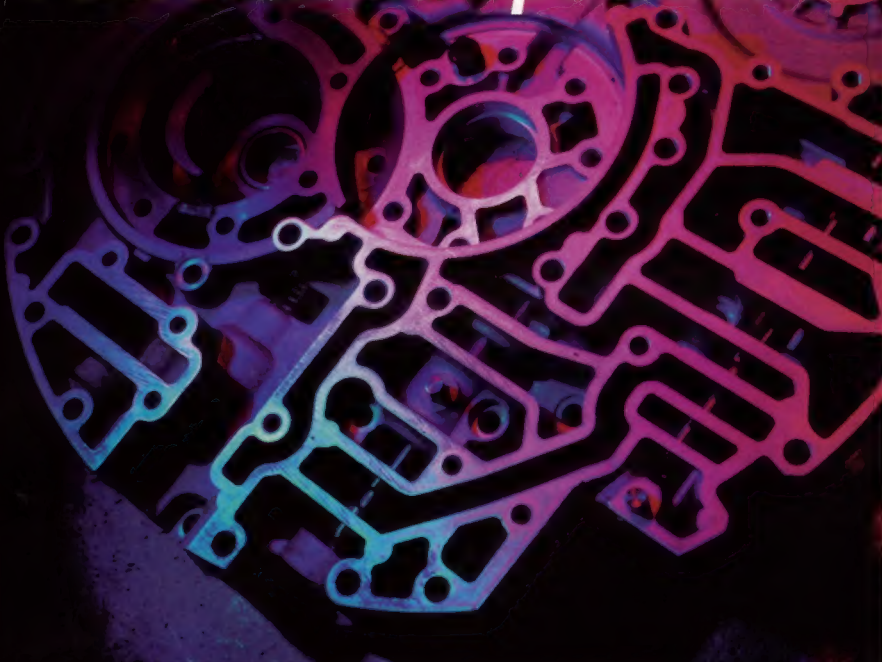
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News

Lower French tolls

Operators using the French Maurienne Motorway will be pleased to hear that toll charges on the Alton/Saint-Marie-de-Cuines stretch have been lowered by 22.6%. The decision to reduce the tolls was taken by its operating agency, SFTRF, after consultation with the Road Transport Federation of Savoy and based on two major factors. One was that the town of Aiguebell now requires all heavy vehicles to bypass the area (from 31 January 1997). The other was the hazards being encountered on the parallel RN6 highway, particularly the Saint-Pierre-de-Belleville exit which was not designed to accommodate heavy traffic. The new tariff has been designed to encourage traffic to remain on the Maurienne Motorway stretch rather than seeking commercial advantage through avoiding the section and creating local traffic hazards.

Kings Ferry join ACT

The Kings Ferry has become the first commuter coach company to join ACT, the Association for Commuter Transport. Kings Ferry is the second organisation to join ACT since its formation on 4 September and follows the lead set by London Transport. The aim of ACT is to develop and promote ideas and initiatives which will reduce car dependency and encourage commuters to switch to more environmentally friendly methods of travel.

ACT was founded by Boots Co., BAA, the DETR, Nottinghamshire County Council, PTRC Education and Research Services, Steer Davies Gleave, City of Edinburgh Council, Transport 2000 and Trent Buses. Membership is available for individuals and corporations. For details call 0181 741 1516.



Kings Ferry-keen to reduce car dependency.

CPT at the Conferences

The Confederation of Passenger Transport will again attend all the Party Political Conferences to represent the views of the bus, coach and light rail industries. It aims to highlight work already being done to integrate transport systems, the benefits of Quality Partnerships and the massive contribution that coaches make to the tourist and inter-city travel industries. CPT claims it is an expensive exercise to maintain a presence at all three events but based on results from last year's programme it believes it is money and time well spent.

Book now for Kortrijk

This year's Kortrijk show in Belgium from 17 to 22 October promises to be a fascinating one with new models being unveiled by several of the major European manufacturers, as well as a stronger than usual UK presence. It isn't all vehicles and components, the show has a very considerable tourism presence and extensive support from a wide range of related service providers.

Bus & Coach Buyer has organised a visit to the show and some of Belgium's best tourism attractions with support from Scania Bus & Coach (UK), P&O European Ferries, Westtoer and the European Coach & Bus Fair, Kortrijk. Departing from Worksop on Friday 17 October, returning on Sunday 19th, it costs only £65 (sharing a twin room) or £85 (single room). For full details see page 12 of this issue. Please book early to avoid disappointment as the number of places is limited.

Drugs campaign

Nottingham City Transport has combined with Decker Media to place banners on ten buses to spread the DARE anti-drugs campaign across the city. DARE - Drug Abuse Resistance Education is based at Radford Road Police Station and represented by officer Mick Cheetham. He spent two years searching for financial support to take the anti-drugs message on the road and is delighted by the new development.

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1992 DENNIS JAVELIN 11M DUPLÉ 320
55 seats, finished cream/red/maroon
.....M.O.T. MARCH 1998

1990 DAF SB 2300 JONCKHEERE DAUVILLE 599 51 reclining seats, toilet + exec. spec., finished white/yellow/orange. Choice of 2
.....M.O.T. JANUARY 1998

1987 SETRA 215HR
49 reclining seats, toilet + exec. spec., including SUTRAK AIR CONDITIONING, finished silver.
.....M.O.T. MARCH 1998

1989 LEYLAND TIGER 260 12 DUPLÉ 320
53 reclining seats, finished cream/orange
.....M.O.T. OCTOBER 1997

NEW 1981 DAF PLAXTON SUPREME
53 seats, power door, brown interior, finished brown/cream.M.O.T. JULY 1998

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1989 VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE
53 seats, finished all white.
.....M.O.T. MARCH 1998

1989 VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE
57 seats, finished all white.
.....M.O.T. MARCH 1998

1989 VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE
51 seater, toilet + exec. spec., finished all white.
.....M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1998

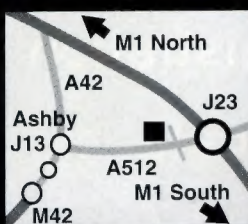
1987 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200
53 reclining seats, finished white with green/blue flash on sides.M.O.T. DECEMBER 1997

1987 DAF MB 230 DKFL 12M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500
51 reclining seats, toilet + exec. spec., finished white/orange stripe.M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1997

1987 LEYLAND TIGER 260 12M DUPLÉ 320 53 reclining seats, toilet + exec. spec., finished cream/duo red.M.O.T. MARCH 1998

1988 DAF MB230 VAN HOOL ALIZEE
51 reclining seats, toilet + exec. spec., + Telma, finished green/grey/fawnM.O.T. JAN 1998

NEW 1986 BOVA FUTURA
49 reclining seats, toilet + exec. spec., finished cream with red stripes.M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1998



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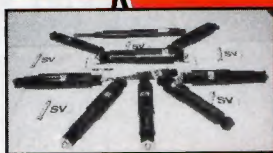
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Vehicle Launch

Prima B7R

Earlier this year Volvo launched its rear engined B7R middle weight chassis in South Africa and visitors to Volvo's stand at Coach & Bus '97 will be able to see the first example for the UK market. Volvo claim that the B7R is a complementary model to the premium B10M and is targeted at the inter city and urban coach sector, though its appeal may well prove to be much broader than this. A derivative of Plaxton's popular Premiere 320, the body is an extension of the InterUrban concept and is outwardly virtually indistinguishable from these models. The package will be marketed as the Prima B7R, and is to be available through both the Kirkby Coach & Bus and Yeates Bus & Coach dealerships from January 1998.

A pre-launch preview was held in Scarborough last week, attended by senior representatives of both Volvo and Plaxton, as well as the trade press. Though the event did not include an opportunity to travel on the coach, it did give an idea of the likely appeal of the vehicle. In addition to displaying the first Prima B7R, Volvo had temporarily imported a left hand drive splitter chassis with lowered step arrangement which was available for inspection.

Prima B7R is a recognition by both Plaxton and Volvo that while standard specifications have grown ever high on coach chassis and bodies, not everyone needs, or wants to pay for, a top of the range product for all of their work requirements. For many something with strong coach appeal but less frills is entirely adequate and more affordable. The builders have also noted the budget offerings of other bodybuilders, most of which are mounted on chassis other than Volvo, and acted to ensure they do not lose out in this sector. With a list price of £129,000 plus VAT, the basic Prima B7R will not be the cheapest 12 metre coach available but it will offer a convincing package and, it is claimed, good residual values.



The Prima is a de-specified derivative of the Premiere 320 body.

Volvo B7R

The B7R is essentially a rear engined version of the B7F model which has been offered by Volvo in world markets for around 20 years. Unlike the B10M it is of bolted, rather than welded, construction. In other less-developed markets the Boras built chassis is offered as a city bus for which purpose a stepped front chassis arrangement is an option. Prima B7R will be offered in two forms. At the NEC will be

option is expected to add around £3,000 to the price.

It features the six cylinder, seven litre Volvo D7B260 engine which is turbocharged, intercooled and mounted in-line at the rear. The unit is that used in the FL7 truck range and develops 260bhp (191kW) at 2200rpm and 1100Nm (810lb/ft) maximum torque at 1300rpm. Gearbox options are either the ZF S6.85 six speed manual with Telma 191 electric retarder as standard or the automatic ZF

rear system taken from the FL7/10 truck. Other features of the specification include two 170Ah batteries, two 80 Amp alternators, two 150 litre fuel tanks and 295/80R22.5 tyres on 8.25x22.5 ten bolt steel disc wheels.

Volvo's warranty includes 12 months unlimited mileage and 24 months driveline cover and there is also the highly regarded support of Action Service Europe. Volvo is confident that the B7R will not take sales that would otherwise have gone to the B10M because although it is built for the same lifespan, it is not as highly specified and will only be offered with 3.2 metre high coachwork. Illustrating the nature of the differences between the B7R and the B10M is the B10M's electronically controlled ECAS suspension system which reacts much quicker than the B7R's pneumatic system.

Plaxton Prima

In order to reduce the cost of the body Plaxton's designers have reduced the specification in comparison with the standard Premiere 320, although sales director, David Quainton, stressed that in doing so they had taken care to ensure that it retained its appeal. Looking round the coach it was clear that though compromises had been made, they were not ones which rendered the Prima B7R unat-



The interior is attractive and well finished if less highly specified than a Premiere 320.

the 6300mm wheelbase rigid chassis, to be followed in April next year by a split chassis option on which Plaxton will cut the frame to provide a luggage capacity up from 6.7 cubic metres to a far more easily usable 8.0 cubic metres. The split chassis

4HP500 with torque converter and integral retarder. Various ratios are available between 5.43:1 and 3.78:1 on the Volvo EV85 single reduction rear axle.

Full air suspension is fitted, that at the front being from the B10M MkII, with the

Vehicle Launch

tractive. The main differences are that extensive use is made of cord trim where moquette would be used in the Premiere 320, the racks are those used in the earlier Paramount model complete

over the quality of finish or the structural specification of the body which has bonded double glazing in common with all Premiere models. As with the Premiere and Excalibur, Prima benefits from

stainless steel, while the side access and locker doors are aluminium with Happich hinges.

One way in which Plaxton has been able to sharpen its pencil is by offering Prima B7R as a standard package with a limited number of options, thereby simplifying the build process. You can't buy one with a toilet or server but it is possible to specify Plaxton's newly introduced UK air conditioning package which has been developed in conjunction with Sutrak. The standard seating layout provides 55 recliners and no courier seat, which does not explain why the launch vehicle had 53 and a courier seat. Inertia lap belts are standard and it is possible to specify MTB seats with three point belts at extra cost. The vehicle inspected had the optional single piece screen although the three piece arrangement already familiar on the Interurban is standard. A rear window is also standard, unlike the Stagecoach Interurbans seen in build at the factory during the launch.

I had few criticisms of the vehicle which was well finished. Adjustment was needed to an offside mirror which could not be seen clearly from the driving seat and I thought the deep recess below the



A left hand drive B7R splitter chassis.

with reading lights and forced air ventilation, and the ceiling lighting is not continuous. Full draw curtains and a Chapman driver's seat with three point belt are part of the inclusive package, as is a power operated, double glazed, pivot style entrance door.

There is no compromise

some build improvements which see the use of Cromwell stainless steel rather than sheet steel for under body floor panelling. The entire frame is jig-built and corrosion protected using Mebon with all underfloor tubing wax injected. The main side panels are of one piece



A seven litre Volvo D7B260 developing 260bhp powers the B7R.

rear screen and behind the rear row of seats served no purpose and was likely to collect rubbish. My other criticism, and probably the only aspect that would be regarded as a compromise by operators, was the luggage hold



NEOPLAN

Carlton House, Euroway Estate, Hellaby, Rotherham, South Yorkshire.

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Vehicle Launch

layout on the B7R. With the rear engine there is no conventional boot, so all of the luggage has to go between the axles. With the B7R bodied as a solid chassis frame the capacity consists of relatively narrow sidelockers with a small central section giving access straight through. Although it will be more expensive one would imagine that the split chassis option giving a very usable eight cubic metres will be more popular with operators than this rather difficult to load 6.7 cubic metre option.

The rear engine of the B7R dictates a raised floorline at the rear of the saloon, with a step up to the penultimate row of seats and a further step up to the rear row. Though this does reduce headroom at the rear, it gives the rear two rows an improved view.

Using the split B7R chassis it would be possible to build 11.0 or possibly 10.0 metre vehicles but at present there are no plans to do so and the standard vehicle will be 12.0 metres long, 3.35 metres high and 2.5 metres wide.

Summary

At from £129,000 compared with a price of from £145,000 for the standard Premiere 320 Volvo B10M, operators have another option which they

in 1998.

Mike Ball, MD of Volvo Bus said, 'The Prima B7R has been developed jointly by Plaxton and Volvo Bus to meet the growing requirement for a keenly priced, high qual-



The luggage hold on the Prima B7R is not particularly spacious although a split chassis version is to follow.

ity coach aimed specifically at the private hire and growing commuter travel sector of the market. Passengers will welcome the high standard of appointment and hard pushed operators will welcome the straightforward, no-nonsense approach adopted for the design of the Prima B7R - the combination offers operators the opportunity to increase

their already narrow margins in a fierce and increasingly competitive sector of the market.'

David Quinton commented, 'We're offering the market choice. The market sector is demanding and not totally satisfied by the products currently on offer.' He added that the market dictated products which were cost effective but retained versatility, true coach styling, competitive pricing and would be traded as a coach in order to retain high residuals. My initial impression was that these objectives had been met by the Prima B7R.

There may be some initial caution about the B7R chassis which does not yet have the admirable track record of the B10M, but the components are all proven and the price and specification look likely to appeal to operators. Though it may be a cliché to say that this could be the late 1990s equivalent of the Bedford, many operators will see it in this light.

By Stuart Jones



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Come to Kortrijk

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1997's biggest mainland European bus & coach show takes place in Kortrijk, Belgium from 17 - 22 October. To give British operators the opportunity to see the exhibition which covers: vehicles, components, tourism, and related services, Bus & Coach Buyer has organised an educational visit for operators.

The itinerary has been devised to provide plenty of time to see the show and also get the flavour of this historic region of Belgium. See the latest offerings from continental manufacturers, make new contacts, pick up tour ideas and enjoy the company of fellow operators.

The tour departs Friday 17 October returning on the evening of Sunday 19 October. Pick-up points will be Worksop (car parking available), Norman's Cross, Thurrock Services and Dover (Booking Hall).

The price of £65 (Shared room) £85 (Single) will include:

- Two nights accommodation, including breakfast, at the three star Glenmore Hotel, Ostende.
- Coach travel throughout on a Scania K113TRB tri-axle Irizar Century belonging to The Kingsferry Ltd.
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- Dinner on Saturday night at the St Cornhill restaurant, Aalbeke.
- Entry to the exhibition.
- Tour of Ostende with cocktail reception.
- Tour of Ieper including a visit to preview the new 'In Flanders Fields' museum.

Places are limited and preference will be given to coach operators.

Bookings with accompanying cheques should be sent to Bus & Coach Buyer, Kortrijk Visit, The Publishing Centre, 1 Woolram Wygate, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1NU. Cheques should be made payable to Bus & Coach Buyer.

In order to meet the legislative requirements with regard to bonding, Bus & Coach Buyer will be acting as agents for The Kingsferry Ltd, The Coach Station, Pump Lane, Gillingham, Kent. ME8 7TJ.

Bus & Coach Buyer would like to acknowledge the help and support given by Scania Bus & Coach UK Ltd, P&O European Ferries, Westtoer, and the 14th European Coach & Bus Fair, Kortrijk in the organisation of this event.



**Car &
Bus '97**

Coach Euro Test



The coaches line up at the motorway service area which served as the control point on the 80km test route.

Europe's latest put to the test

Once every two years journalists from Europe's leading coach magazines are invited to take part in the Coach Euro Test, with Great Britain represented by Bus & Coach Buyer. This year's event, held alongside Lake Maggiore in Northern Italy, was organised by the team from Italy's *Tuttotrasporti* magazine, edited by Lorenzo Raffo. Eight coaches were invited to attend and based on their performance over the week of the tests, the judges of the European Bus & Coach of the Year jury will make a decision about the winner of the title to be awarded at October's European Coach & Bus Show at Kortrijk.

Although the Jury spends only two days looking at the vehicles, the tests take a full five days to complete. This is because various technical comparisons including fuel consumption at various speeds, nine different acceleration tests, noise level tests throughout the vehicles at various speeds and a rolling test, are carried out before they arrive. To give the Jury a clear idea of the vehicles' capabilities an 80km circular route including motorways, hills and cross country roads proved an ideal way of putting them through their paces. All vehicles were fully weighted to represent a passenger load, using either water containers or sandbags, which did tend to limit the opportuni-

ty to try out the seating throughout the interiors. To UK operators with customers who are seat belt obsessed, their absence other than on exposed seats on the test vehicles was noteworthy, although Neoplan mentioned that three point belts can be specified on the Starliner.

Of the eight coaches invited seven arrived at the test headquarters in Baveno. These consisted of the: Renault Iliade GTX; DAF SB4000 Berkhof Axial 70; Neoplan Starliner N516SHD; Van Hool T915 Acron; Setra S315 GT HD; Iveco TopClass; and MAN Lion's Coach. Sadly the Irizar Century bodied Scania K113 was not able to participate which was a disappointment as UK operators would no doubt have been interested in its performance. None of the coaches are available in the UK yet, although several of them may be in coming years, especially if the value of the £ remains

at recent levels. Significantly for the UK market which is dominated by body on chassis designs, all but the DAF SB4000 Berkhof Axial 70 were of integral construction. Though most of the coaches were manufacturer's demonstrators, specified accordingly, the DAF and the Van Hool were customer vehicles scheduled to be delivered soon after the test.

In drawing their own conclusions about the comparative merits of the vehicles, operators will be interested to know how much they cost. In this respect, manufacturers were asked to give the real price for which identical coaches could be bought at the time of the test (May 1997). Thus, while Neoplan's published price for the Starliner was DM813,000, the real price was DM575,000. The quoted prices for the other vehicles was: MAN Lion's Coach - DM380,000; Iveco TopClass - DM460,000;

Van Hool Acron - DM500,000; Setra S315 GT-HD - DM485,000; DAF SB4000 Berkhof Axial 70 - DM445,000 and Renault Iliade GTX - FF1,600,000.

B&CB regularly tests coaches but it is unusual to get the opportunity to look at designs in such a head-to-head manner. The event underlined the overwhelmingly high standard of the products on offer to Europe's operators today, also showing that as things become ever more standardised there is still scope to come up with original and creative ways of making coaches more comfortable for both passengers and drivers. Neoplan's portable moped and the glass roof section of the Iveco TopClass are some of the more unusual examples of this.

All of the contestants had strengths, and where there were weaknesses they were generally not damning ones. There is not long to wait before the Coach of the Year is announced and this article may well give you an idea of who the frontrunners are. The winner will have to be good to triumph in the face of such an array of design and engineering excellence. On the following pages we report on the performance of the contestants.

By Stuart Jones



The Setra goes through its paces during the test.

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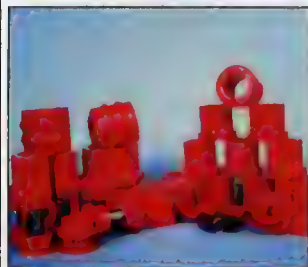
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Coach Euro Test

The Coaches

DAF SB4000 Berkhof Axial 70



DAF Bus works closely with Berkhof on a projects such as the Premier city bus and the test coach was a joint entry, indeed the SB4000 Axial 70 was the only body on chassis combination to participate in the test. DAF Bus International launched the SB4000 in Europe during 1996 though it has yet to debut in the UK. A development of the SB3000 with which it shares many components, the SB4000 has a four bellows air suspension system, disc brakes as standard at the front and the 100% mechanical PGS (Precision Gear Shifting) system which eliminates play in the cables and is now standard on manual gearbox DAFs. The air suspension system reduces the rear overhang by 23 centimetres. The standard power unit is the DAF WS268, 365bhp, 11.6 litre unit which achieves Euro 2 without the aid of electronic control. There are also 330bhp and 428bhp options.

Berkhof unveiled the Axial with its distinctive aerodynamic front roof hump two years ago at Car & Bus '95, Kortrijk. It has since proved popular in the UK where most have been 3.5 metres high and mounted on chassis other than DAF. A new dash layout is ergonomically designed to reduce the amount of movements a driver needs to make and a refrigerator is included, having previously been located next to the courier. So as not to lose space in the luggage racks or raise the vehicle height, the air conditioning evaporators have been incorporated into the air ducts.

Finished immediately prior to the event, the coach was a customer vehicle rather than a demonstrator. Its newness rather worked against it as several journalists commented on the tightness of the engine which had some way to go before it could be considered run-in. Despite this the fuel consumption figures were above average for the

group at all four tested speeds, although acceleration was below. When the PGS box was launched I could detect no difference compared with the previous system and other journalists agreed that this was the case on the test coach. However, as the system promises to be more reliable, needs less adjustment and can be driven if one of the three cables breaks, it appears to offer an advantage to operators. The ride was pleasant and the coach felt very stable.

Although the interior was comfortable, I was a little disappointed in the interior finish which I did not feel was up to Berkhof's normal standard. It lacked attention to detail in areas such as the toilet door and racks, suggesting completion had been hurried. Plastic stickers were used as warning signs and were already starting to detach.

Iveco Orlandi TopClass



TopClass is the flagship of the Iveco coach line-up and is based on the underframe of the EuroClass integral which won the European Coach of the Year title in 1995. Designed by Giorgio Giugiaro, it is completed at the Orlandi factory in Modena and incorporates numerous special design touches, including Alcantara trim specially woven for the vehicle and three large double glazed panels in the roof centre which give passengers a view of the sky, or alternatively tall buildings in a city.

While the 375bhp power output placed the TopClass in the middle of the power ratings within the group, the fact that it was a 9.5 litre unit against the 11.6 litres plus of the others, meant that it was at a disadvantage, especially low down. The AVS system on the ZF 8S.180 gearbox took some getting used to, selecting second to start when I thought first would have been preferable.

The real difference between the TopClass and the EuroClass is in the body where Orlandi have gone to town to make it a bit special.

Among the nice touches were Lazerini 22-80 seats available only in the TopClass, a neat and spacious centre toilet with a slide out drinks tray top and hinge down newspaper rack, a commendably wide centre exit, and video screens that come down from the ceiling electronically. The racks are modular and combine the air conditioning and stale air channels.

Several of the coaches had satellite route finding devices and the Iveco's Magneti Morelli system (costing DM4,400) was one of the best. On an aesthetic note, I didn't think the all silver livery of the test coach did it any favours, an identical vehicle in an operator's colours called at the hotel with a party during our stay and this looked stunning.

MAN Lion's Coach



The Lion's Coach is MAN's economy integral model built at the MAN plant in Turkey, with coachwork designed in Spain. Though the DM380,000.00 price tag for the test coach is regarded in Germany as very competitive, the underframe is exactly the same as MAN's prestigious Lion's Star.

Powered by the 350bhp version of MAN's D2866LOH six cylinder engine, rather than the 400bhp unit fitted in the Neoplan and Van Hool, the MAN was nevertheless a creditable performer. In acceleration tests the least powerful of the coaches was much the quickest from 0 to 40km/h and also fastest from 0 to 400 metres. However it took longer than the others to accelerate from 70 to 90km/h and 70 to 100km/h which is not surprising as the 350bhp rating was the lowest of all participants.

The only problem I experienced driving the coach was that the air suspended seat was rather poorly damped, bouncing up and down, even on relatively smooth road surfaces. MAN recognise the problem and will be fitting a different seat on future production vehicles. The designers had clearly done a good job with the aerodynamics as

Coach Euro Test

noise levels at the front were very low, indeed at a constant 60km/h they were an astonishing 50.4 dB(A), a full 6.5 dB(A) lower than the second quietest, the Van Hool Acron. Further back in the coach noise levels were noticeably higher, particularly at higher speeds.

The lower price of this coach compared with the others was reflected in the interior, certainly not its handling. Though the trim was reasonably good, there were more exposed screw heads than one expects on a MAN. The continental exit was wide, the Turkish built toilet didn't impress but is to be replaced with a German one, the luggage capacity can be up to 14 cubic metres and the racks were strong and serviceable. All in all it looked pretty good value for money.

Neoplan Starliner N516SHD



Launched at the IAA exhibition in Hannover last year where it was the star of the show, the Starliner is Neoplan's top of the range coach. It combines futuristic use of form and materials with elements of retro-styling, notably the rear wheelcovers, to produce a vehicle which looks like nothing else on the road. Naturally a Starliner would have a satellite navigation system, in this case the Philips Carina system also found on the Renault Iliade. This was not the only innovation, the Starliner boasted with them, including the UDS black box recorder, wireless control of the luggage lockers, wheelcovers which reduce spray and a portable moped mounted under the floor to help the driver get between the hotel and coach park.

Built to the new European maximum width of 2.55 metres, it is as startlingly different inside as out with the sloping window pillars and curved glass contriving to give the impression that the windows bend outwards, giving an atmosphere of increased spaciousness, accentuated by the curved base of the aircraft style individual drop down racks. The

full length lights in blue are both futuristic and attractive and the whole vehicle looks stunning.

One of the innovations shown at Hannover was a steel central seat pillar projecting above the seat back and designed to protect passengers in the case of a rollover. This has not proved popular and the test vehicle incorporated a revised version in which the pillar has been shortened with its head nestling between the headrests of each double seat. While the idea may be a good one it is not practical. It's far too easy for a passenger to hit his head on an uncompromising piece of steel, as I found out to my cost. I was also disappointed by the level of finish in several areas.

In terms of interior noise the Starliner proved something of a curate's egg with the best readings in the group at the rear of the saloon, and some of the worst in the fore and mid sections.

Along with a couple of other entries the coach was not run-in having completed under 800km prior to the test. Perhaps surprisingly, given its aerodynamic appearance, it returned the poorest fuel consumption figures in the group at all four of the tested speeds. Nevertheless it was an enjoyable drive, with lots of power, good visibility and mirrors as well as a comfortable driving position.

Renault Iliade GTX



Renault's Iliade is an updated version of its long serving FR1 design first introduced in 1984. It has a new front similar to the Premier truck and Megane car, a new driver's cockpit area and the option of a new 380bhp engine in top of the range models. The GTX is the highest specification offering of the nine model range and has as standard a TBV (Telecommande de Boite de Vitesses) semi automatic gearshift system.

Renault claim to have developed the Iliade by finding out what customers liked about the FR1, keeping those features, and coming up with

new ideas for those aspects that were not popular. Apparently they weren't impressed with the visibility, interior noise, accessibility or the level of equipment but they did like the mechanical components. Their press representative claimed that with the Iliade they had gone for 'Grace, Space and Pace.' It's like a 12 metre Espace, he quipped.

I found the loud bleep emitted by the TBV box with every change somewhat wearing but was later told this could be turned off when the vehicle was stationary. While opinion was usually consistent on the driving merits of the different vehicles, it differed widely on this coach with one tester rating it more highly than any other, and others criticising the TBV system.

The Iliade was well appointed though not without its shortcomings, one of the worst of which was in the area of the continental exit. The steep staircase is comparatively narrow and I could not see how a hostess could use the kitchenette unit safely because, with the unit front open and the fold-down tray deployed, there was insufficient room left to stand comfortably in front of it. It would also have prevented passengers getting to and from the toilet. It may have been because of the road surfaces and the driver at the time but I felt that the Iliade swayed more than any of the other coaches when off the motorway. On the plus side the level of finish was good, the seats were comfortable although the squabs were a little short, the toilet offered good headroom and a deep sink, and most surfaces appeared to be easy to clean.

Setra S315GT-HD



Using modular design and construction techniques, the Setra side of the Evobus organisation has created the Kombibus family of buses and coaches, each of which shares most of its basic components with other family members. At one extreme is the Setra S315NF low floor bus and at the other, the

3.65m high, S315GT-HD coach. The range covers 11 to 18 metre lengths and also includes the Mercedes 0550 which is 60% Kombibus derived.

Offered in Europe with a choice of engines, the S315GT-HD was the only coach in the test to have an eight cylinder engine - the Mercedes Benz OM442LA producing 381bhp, although a six cylinder would normally be standard. It gave a very comfortable drive although the steering was slightly less precise than the Van Hool. The Voith retarder was very effective and at its first stage offered a cruise control facility. Unless over-ridden the cruise control will not allow the coach to go faster than the speed at which the cruise control is brought in, which should help overcome the problem of drivers forgetting they have the retarder on as they begin to accelerate again.

In terms of interior finish I thought the execution of the 49 seat Setra probably the best of all. Though it was less highly specified than most of the others, every trim join was spot-on and every moulding perfect. While the others were either equipped or offered with enclosed racks, the Setra has open ones only though these are spacious. The modular system does make it easy to specify the coach to suit - door locations, optional conference areas and heating systems can all be modified to requirements. Another advantage is that the standard heating system can be easily upgraded to air conditioning as fitted on the test coach.

Van Hool T915 Acron



Unveiled at the 1995 Kortrijk exhibition, the Van Hool T9 series is based on modular build principles and is gradually superseding the popular and long-lived T8 series. The T915 Acron is a 3.6 metre high integral coach (the sister Alicron is similar but 3.47m high) powered by a 400bhp MAN euro 2 engine driving through a ZF 8S.180

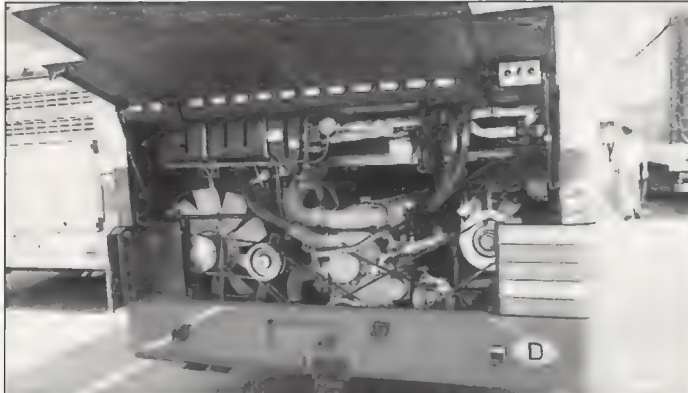
Coach Euro Test

eight speed range change gearbox.

The coach used was one ordered by a German operator and finished to his specification with a horseshoe shaped lounge at the rear. In noise tests the Acron was particularly impressive recording the lowest readings of the group in both the fore and mid sections of the coach at both 80km/h and 100km/h. It was slightly less quiet at the rear, notably at 60km/h where it recorded the worst figure, but this was perhaps in part because of the lounge layout.

On the road the Acron is very stable, in part because of an extended A frame made of forged steel incorporating a jacking point, and centralised air bags mounted high in the frame. The front suspension is independent which Van Hool said helps reduce noise transmission from the road. Steering was light but responsive and the coach was a pleasure to drive.

The interior was very neatly designed and put together with a complete absence of sharp edges. The Royale Comfort seats lived up to their title, and there were a host of important little touches that showed Van Hool had really thought about both passenger comfort and the durability of the coach. I thought the lighting, rack and rack edging treatment very tidy, liked the way the air conditioning system was completely hidden, and found the attention paid to small items such as cupboard fastenings exuded quality. A particularly good example of creativity was the toilet compartment which was the only one to feature a side-ways facing seat, making the most of the available space. Designed by Van Hool the toilet's only failings were a strange choice of colours (bright green and white on a silver and purple coach) and a light switch that couldn't be found in the dark.



Both Neoplan's Starliner and the Van Hool T915 Acron (pictured) were equipped with the 400bhp MAN D2866LOH23 six cylinder engine.



Neoplan's Starliner had seats with substantial metal pillars between each double. Although intended as a safety feature, I found it far too easy to hit one's head on them. The sense of space created by the window pillars is evident.



Out on the road with the Lion's Coach and Setra.

Specifications at a glance

	DAF SB4000 Berkhof Axial	Iveco TopClass	MAN Lion's Coach	Neoplan N 516SHD Starliner	Renault Iliade GTx	Setra S315 GT-HD	Van Hool T915 Acron
ENGINE							
Manufacturer	DAF WS268M	Iveco 8460.41M	MAN D2866 LOH26	MAN D2866 LOH	Renault MIRD 06.23.56A41	Mercedes OM442LA	MAN D2866 LOH
No of Cylinders	6	6	6	6	6	8	6
Bhp	365	375	350	400	380	381	400
Torque	1500 Nm at 1500rpm	1670Nm at 1100rpm	1500Nm at 800-1600rpm	1730Nm at 1000-1500rpm	1750Nm at 1200rpm	1850Nm at 1100rpm	1730Nm at 1000-1500rpm
Spec. Fuel Consumption grams/kw/hour	196	195	189	191	—	195	191
GEARBOX							
Manufacturer/model	ZF 8S.140 with PGS	ZF 8S.180 with AVS	ZF 8S.180	ZF 8S. 180	Renault B81 with TBV	ZF 8S.180	ZF 8S.180
Type	manual	semi-automatic	manual	8	semi-automatic	manual	8
Gears	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Ratios	8.49-1.00	8.73-1.00	6.38-0.76	8.73-1.00	7.36-0.75	8.73-1.00	8.73-1.00
AXLES							
Front	DAF 154N	Iveco 5865	MAN V9-80L	Neoplan VN.9	Renault	Setra	Van Hool-MAN V9-80 50
Back	DAF 1339	Rockwell S.153	MAN HOY 1175	Neoplan HN12/ZFA131/591	Renault PX1141	Setra	Eaton 11.36 hypoid
BRAKES							
Front/back	discs/drums	discs/drums	discs/drums	discs/discs	discs/drums	discs/drums	discs/drums
Retarder	ZF intarder	Voith VHBK 133	Voith VHBK 133	ZF intarder	Telma F2200	Voith VR133	Telma F2200
Type	hydraulic	hydraulic	hydraulic	hydraulic	electromagnetic	hydraulic	electromagnetic
WEIGHTS/DIMENSIONS							
Kerb weight	c. 12,500 kg	13,700 kg	14,500 kg	13,750 kg	12,545 kg	13,150 kg	13,500 kg
G.V.W.	18,600 kg	17,837 kg	18,000 kg	18,000 kg	18,500 kg	18,000kg	18,000 kg
Wheelbase	6000mm	6210mm	6060mm	5800mm	6200mm	6080mm	5910mm
Passenger Capacity	48+1+1	46+1+1	48+1+1	49+1+1	53+1+1	50+1+1	36+5 (saloon) +1+1
Fuel Capacity (litres)	720	460	400-200	510	500	535	570

Rally Focus



One of 32 dual door Darts for Metroline in London.

It can't be Showbus

Showbus is a unique event. After all, if you consciously tried to plan one day that brought together not just preserved buses from around the country but a cross section of the best and newest in the industry you might well have difficulty generating any support. It's not all old buses, nor is it just for the enthusiast but equally it isn't really a showcase for the industry either. But it is a lot of fun. Showbus is the one day a year when anyone who has an interest in buses can come along, or bring a bus, and have a chat to other people who are also interested in buses, whether they be enthusiasts, operators or even on the odd occasion, manufacturers. There is no them and us, just everybody having a good day out.

It has become something of a tradition in recent years



Two of the Brenson collection. A 1949 Santus Seddon MKIV and 1950 Bedford OB flank another OB with Felix of Long Melford.

for vehicles from the big groups to be marshalled in their own areas and this year was no exception. Some of the drivers took great care to make sure that their vehicles were shown off to best advantage and some put them in mini-displays of their own.

Ten out of ten went to the team from Stagecoach Western Buses who brought down one of their articulated Plaxton Volvos. By no means all of the Stagecoach entries were in the corporate colours and it was nice to see some of the lesser known and newest

names in the Group such as Peter Sheffield from Grimsby and Stagecoach Oxford.

FirstBus buses were out in force with the corporate fleet-name very much to the fore giving the sense that maybe an external corporate identity is now developing. The choice of blue applied to a Greater Manchester Volvo B10BLE for new quality services is an interesting one though. As well as one of the Northampton GasBus Volvo B10Ls, Provincial's Mercedes diesel electric hybrid was on display as was a Alexander Royale Olympian for Greater Glasgow, and a CentreWest Routemaster with small fleet-names between decks and an 'f' logo on the side where once roundels and the like would have been located. There was also some evidence of the Cowie stripes, notably on a rebodied East Lancs Volvo from Grey Green but now working for Colchester, or is it, theoreti-



Iain Smart with his Bluebird Buses Volvo Plaxton Interurban.



Guildford & West Surrey Darts with Plaxton and East Lancs coachwork.

Rally Focus



Two Bristol MWs from 1960s coaching days.



Wallace Arnold's 1958 Plaxton bodied Reliance.



The 1936 Cumberland TD4 which was rebodied by ECW in 1950. It is the oldest surviving Cumberland vehicle and has been in preservation since 1965.

cally speaking, London & Country. Actually I think its now Leaside/South London, it's not always easy to keep up.

As for the furthest travelled bus, both Stagecoach and FirstBus had strong contenders. Grampian's Aberdeen Daimler CVG6 was at the show as was a Bluebird Buses Plaxton Interurban Volvo. Although a Stonehaven based coach, Bluebird Buses' Iain Smart had brought it down from Aberdeen with help from the lads at Fife Scottish, Iain being a loyal supporter of the event. In previous years, he had entered Bluebird's Albion Viking and one year a Routemaster



Alternatives from FirstBus. A Northampton Volvo and Provincial's Mercedes.

which is quite a drive from Scotland.

It was not just the big operators who were putting on displays. Both Epsom Coaches and Metrobus from the London area had line ups, the former made up of all its Dennis Dart buses. There were also displays of Optare Excels from a variety of operators around the country and some of the latest deckers from East Lancs. Expresslines of Bedford showed four Transits and a Reeve Burgess Swift, but perhaps one of the less obvious, largely because they were not all parked together, was some of the fine collection of post war coaches owned by John Brenson, proprietor of Brentwood Coaches. In fact East Anglian operators were out in force,



Grampian's Aberdeen Corporation Alexander bodied Daimler CVG6.

Felix of Long Melford, Fowler's, Embling's, Kenzie's, Carter's, Dew's, Sander's, Green's of Thorney, Delaine's and Hedingham Omnibus were amongst those there, although the Hedingham bus was less obvious being the fine Great Yarmouth all Leyland PD2/1 which made its debut at rallies last year after many years restoration.

Amongst the many exceptional preserved vehicles were an impressive line of Bristols from the 1950s and 1960s including the 1951 LSX4G prototype from the Ipswich Transport Museum. Other gems were a BMMO S15, the famous pre-war Cumberland ECW bodied Titan TD4, a newly restored Lowestoft ECW bodied AEC Regent II and an immaculate-



A true Cowie bus. A Colchester East Lancs bodied Volvo B10M which started life as a coach with Grey Green.

ly turned out East Kent Tiger PS1 coach.

I was told over 350 vehicles attended this year's event, which is sobering when you consider most medium size bus operators could not muster that number of vehicles in their entire fleets. There was no shortage of trade being done on the sales stands either. There are prizes at Showbus, but for most people it's a day when they can relax and go out and have a good natter. It didn't rain and the sun shone all day - it couldn't have been Showbus.

By Andy Izatt



Recent East Lancs deckers on Volvo Olympian and Dennis Arrow chassis were on show including a new Olympian for Metrobus, Orpington. These are with Harris Bus, and Capital Citybus for London services, while the RoadCar bus is one of the highest capacity two axle deckers in the country.



This 1938 AEC Regal with 1952 'Queen Mary' style ECW coachwork is part of the John Brenson collection. This is its first season of rallying after the completion of restoration work.

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 1996 N DAF SB3000WS, Van Hool Alizee H, 49R, toilet, air conditioning
 1996 N EOS 90, 49R, toilet, air conditioning
 1995 M DAF SB3000WS, Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R, toilet
 1995 M EOS 90, 49R, toilet, air conditioning
 1995 M DAF SB3000WS, Van Hool Alizee H, 51R, toilet
 1994 L EOS 90, 49R, toilet
 1994 L DAF SB3000WS, Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R, toilet
 1994 L DAF SB3000WS, Van Hool Alizee H, 51R, toilet
 1994 L EOS 90, 49R, toilet, air conditioning
 1994 L DAF MB230LT, Van Hool Alizee H, 51R, toilet
 1992 J DAF MB230LB, Van Hool Alizee H, 51R, toilet
 1992 J DAF SB3000, Auto Van Hool Alizee H, 51R, toilet
 1992 J DAF SB3000, Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R, toilet
 1990 G DAF SB2300 DHS, Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R, toilet

1989 F DAF SB3000, Van Hool Alizee SH, 53R
 1989 F DAF SB2300, Van Hool Alizee DH, 53R
 1989 F DAF SB2300, Van Hool Alizee SH, 49R, toilet
 1989 F DAF MB230LT, Plaxton 3500, 51R, toilet
 1989 F DAF MB230LB, Plaxton 3500, 51R, toilet
 1988 E DAF MB230LT, Plaxton 3500, 53R, toilet

HIGH QUALITY USED COACHES

1993 KMAN Jonckheere Deauville 51R, toilet
 1993 K SETRA S215HD, 49R, toilet, air conditioning
 1993 K DENNIS, Berkhof Excellence, 51R, toilet
 1993 K VOLVO B10M, Jonckheere Deauville, 53R
 1992 K VOLVO B10M, Jonckheere Deauville, 53R
 1992 J DAF SB2305, Plaxton 3200 DH, 53R
 1992 J DAF SB2305, Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R, toilet
 1992 J DAF SB2305 DHTD Duple 320SL, 57R
 1990 G DAF MB230 LT, Plaxton 3500, 49R, toilet
 1990 G DAF SB3000, Van Hool Alizee SH, 49R, toilet
 1990 G VOLVO B10M, Plaxton 3500, 51R, toilet
 1990 G VOLVO B10M, Plaxton 3500, 49R, toilet
 1990 G DAF SB3000, Plaxton 3500, 51R, toilet
 1989 G BOVA Futura, 51R, toilet
 1989 G SCANIA K113, Van Hool Alizee SH, 49R, toilet
 1989 PP BOVA Futura, 49R, toilet
 1989 F DAF SB2300 Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R, toilet
 1989 F VOLVO B10M, Plaxton 3500, 53R
 1989 F DAF SB3000, Van Hool Alizee, 49R, toilet
 1989 F VOLVO B10M, Van Hool Alizee H, 53R
 1989 F DAF SB3000, Plaxton 3500, 51R, toilet
 1988 F DAF SB3000, Van Hool Alizee SH, 49R, toilet
 1988 E VOLVO B10M, Plaxton 3500, 49R, toilet
 1988 PP LAG, Panoramic, 49R, toilet
 1988 PP BOVA Futura, 49R, toilet
 1988 PP DAF SB3000, Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R, toilet
 1988 E VOLVO B10M Van Hool Alizee H, 53R
 1988 E VOLVO B10M Van Hool Alizee H 49R, toilet

1987 PP DAF SB2300, Plaxton 3500, 53R, air conditioning
 1987 D DAF SB2300, Van Hool Alizee H, 49R, toilet
 1987 D DAF SB2300, Plaxton 3500, 49R, toilet
 1986 PP LAG Panoramic, 49R, toilet
 1985 B DAF 2300 Plaxton 3200, 53E

BUSES FROM OUR HIRE FLEET

1997 P DENNIS DART, 10m Wrights Crusader, 39 Str, wheelchair and buggy
 1995 N/M DAF SB220, Northern Counties Paladin, 49 Str
 1995 M DAF SB220, Ikarus Citibus, 49 Str
 1992 K DAF SB220, Ikarus Citibus, 49 Str
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Accessible RH from Robin Hood

An accessible version of the RH minibus produced by Robin Hood Vehicle Industries has just been launched. The example pictured is based on an Iveco Ford 49.10 chassis with the distinctive RH front and a steel framed coachbuilt body. It carries up to 20 detachable seats and features twin opening rear doors to facilitate the underfloor passenger lift. The entrance door is an electric folding type and the steps have been revised for easy access. Windows are tinted and framed in alloy with top sliding vents.

The vehicle is fully insulated and treated against corrosion and features an anti-crush roof design plus side-impact bars for additional protection. Flooring is constructed to surpass EEC requirements for seat anchorages. There is no driver's door on the Welfare Bus but its specification does include



Interior of the new Welfare RH from Robin Hood. Twenty detachable seats are fitted.

either a Webasto or Eberspacher saloon heater. The vehicle is to get its first public airing at the CTA exhibition in Blackpool during November.

CTA report on door to door transport in London

A report entitled 'Blueprint for Change' has been produced by the Community Transport Association. It looks at door to door transport for disabled people in London and has revealed a serious shortfall in performance, largely caused through duplication of services and vehicles which are unused for long periods throughout the day. It also calls for better integration with public transport which is rapidly becoming more accessible to disabled people.

The report is CTA's response to the Government's study of door to door transport, announced by Transport Minister Glenda Jackson. The Jackson study forms part of the Government's consultation process for establishing a new Greater London Authority and the CTA's report expresses concern that this will seek a top-down approach to the problem, as previously favoured in a Government study compiled by Richmond Accessible Transport. CTA recognises the need for greater co-ordination between transport companies but wants it carried out at local levels, allowing disabled people

to influence the type of service they require. CTA believes failure to do this will result in services few people want or need.

'Blueprint' calls for an interface between the GLA and London boroughs to develop a strategic approach to the problem. It criticises the rigidity of the six dial-a-ride services and calls on them to change their working practices in response to the changing environment, calling for a re-direction of some of the £11m funding should they fail to comply. Other areas in which the Government is called upon to assist include: allowing Section 19 operators to obtain Fuel Duty Rebate; giving Section 19 operators access to the concessionary fares schemes; and reviewing legislation governing non-emergency patient transport provision to ensure there are no unnecessary obstacles to increasing co-operation with other operators.

Copies of the report are priced £5 each and can be obtained from CTA, 'A' Block, 211 Arlington Road, Camden Town, London NW1 7HD.



The new Welfare Bus from Robin Hood Vehicle Industries.



A PLS Access lift is fitted to this vehicle.



New Toyota

Toyota is to unveil a new wider version of its Optimo IV seating up to 26 passengers at Coach & Bus '97. B&CB has been to Portugal to see the new coach and will be publishing a full report in next week's bumper Coach & Bus '97 preview issue.



Yorkshire Traction has launched its first lowfloor buses on local town routes in Barnsley. A pair of Dennis Dart SLFs with East Lancs 39 seat Spryte bodywork are now operating on routes 343/344 in the Pogmoor and Kingstone areas.

FORECOURT

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£2,000 + VAT

1985 BEDFORD YNT, Plaxton Paramount 3200, 53 seats red and cream exterior, brown and red interior, single plate, clutch, MoT March '98, immaculate condition.....
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£2,500 + VAT

1980 BEDFORD YMT DOM II, 53 seats, MoT March '98, red and cream exterior, red interior, vgc.....
£2,000 + VAT

1985 BEDFORD YNT, Plaxton Paramount 3200, 53 seats red and cream exterior, brown and red interior, single plate, clutch, MoT March '98, immaculate condition.....
£15,500 + VAT ono

1984 LEYLAND TIGER TLII Duple Laser I, 57 seats, red and cream exterior, brown interior, recent engine overhaul, new turbo, MoT March '98, vgc.....
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£34,000 + VAT

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£34,000 + VAT

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£21,000 + VAT

1981 MAN SR280

48 recliners, TV/video, toilet, long MoT

£12,000 + VAT ono

01952 592801

or Mobile:

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BCB/428/4758/FC

1987 MERCEDES 609, 20 seats, Robin Hood body, power steering, power door, painted white, new MoT, choice of 3

MINIBUSES



1987 MCW Metrorider, 23 seats and standees, Cummins engine / power steering / power door, new MoT

1987 LEYLAND SHERPA, Carlyle body, 16 hi-back seats, power door, new MoT, painted in white, good example

1986 MERCEDES 608 20 seats, good MoT, painted in white 1 remaining

1986 IVECO 49.10 19 SEATS, with luggage pen, power door/5 speed manual, new MoT

DOUBLE DECKERS

1977/79 DAIMLER FLEETLINE, MCW bodywork, 76 seats, single entrance, some painted white, new MoT, ideal for school contracts Choice

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1976 LEYLAND NATIONAL MK1, 49 seats, Volvo engine, new MoT only £—

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MAY 1995, VOLVO B10M (SIDE RADIATOR) VAN HOOL ALIZEE HE, 140,000 Kms, tested April 1998, mint condition inside and out, only used on tours and private hire. NO footballs or shuttles etc. Exterior white, interior graffiti grey inc. parcel racks. 49/53 seats, demountable centre sunken toilet, water boiler, radio/cassette/PA, wired for TV/video, magazine nets, full draw curtains, stair and centre carpets, retractable lap belts. £125,000 + VAT ONO

NOVEMBER 1994, TOYOTA OPTIMO MK 3, 21 SEATS, 130,000 Kms, tested October 1997, excellent condition inside and out, retractable lap belts, mainly used on tours. White exterior, grey interior, radio/cassette/PA. £44,000 + VAT ONO

AUGUST 1994, MERCEDES 410D, 16 FF SEATS, 3 point seat belts, 122,000 miles, tested July 1998, excellent condition inside and out, radio/cassette/PA, white exterior, brown interior. £16,000 + VAT ONO

All available during October

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BCB/428/4764/FC

VOLVO B10 M JONCKHEERE P599, 1983 Reg, 50 seater, rear sunken toilet, wired for TV/video, tested Feb 97 £26,500

LEYLAND LEOPARD WILLOWBROOK BODY, 1/5/82 Reg, 49 seater + standees, tested to April '98 (ideal schools, etc) £2,750

LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON VIEWMASTER, 12/8/77 Reg, 53 seater Express doors, tested to Feb '98 S/A (ideal schools) £2,750

LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON SUPREME, 76 Reg, 49 seater, p/door tested Feb '98 S/A, straight coach for year £3,000

LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON SUPREME, 27/4/81 Reg, 53 seater, retrimmed 2 weeks ago, 12 months test S/A £6,250

LEYLAND TIGER DUPE DOMINANT 4, 1/8/81 Reg, 53 seater, retrimmed 2 weeks ago, seat belts, tested Nov '97 S/A, 2 recon heads, 2 months ago £7,500

MAN REEVES BURGESS 28 SEATER, p/door, 6/12/83 Reg, tested March '98 Cheap to clear £4,500

1986 608D MERCEDES, 20 seater, plus standees, p/door, (ideal schools) Without test £1,750 With Test £2,300

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JAN 88/E REG DAF SB3000 VAN HOOL ALIZEE H, auto/retarder, 49 rec, centre toilet, fridge, boiler, wired for TV/video

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49 SEATER EXEC**

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Toilet, VGC

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Used for training vehicle, new gearbox, engine, outstanding condition

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46 recliners or 44 with servery, rear floor level toilet, TV/video, courier, curtains, etc, taxed and tested, owner driver, only used on tours and private hire, excellent throughout

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25/35 Seater considered in P/X
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72 seat executive, fitted with 4 TV, video, fridge, toilet, drinks machine, drivers bunk, MoT Jan '98

£59,500 ONO + VAT

This vehicle is in excellent condition

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BCB/428/4950/DA

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DAF MB230 PLAXTON 3200

52 seats plus toilet and drinks, MoT February 1998

£37,750

1988

DAF DHTD PLAXTON 3200 - LOW DRIVER

53 recliners, radio cassette, PA, a classy motor, MoT August 1998

£43,000

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BCB/428/4729/DD

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82 LEYLAND DOUBLE DECK 680, Semi-Auto, east Lancs, single entrance, 75 seats, with test and tyres. **£5,000. Immediate delivery.** Part ex welcome. Blythwood Motors 0141 221 3165 or 0141 639 6107 eves. BCB/428/4960/DD

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1 x MCW

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Cummins L10, fully auto, 51 reclining seats, rear toilet with many extras, immaculate condition

£64,000 ONO

TEL: 01994 240274

(West Wales) BCB/428/4751/LE

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MINIBUS

1985 FORD TRANSIT 190

20 seater with belts,
1 x MoT May 98,
1 x MoT April 98

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USED

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Choice of 2
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M 95 TRANSIT 190 DIESEL, 14 seat minibus, std factory model, high back seats, COIF, in white, mint, low mileage, choice of 5**£13,995 + VAT**
Buy/Lease from £71 p/w



92 J REG TOYOTA OPTIMO II, 18 seat luxury coach, 90,000 miles only, high ratio diff, mint contion**£29,995 + VAT**
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P REG LDV PILOT, Diesel, 12 seat minibus, 3,000 miles only, power steering, high back seats, 3 point seatbelts, mint condition, balance of manufacturer warranty**£13,995 + VAT**
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LOOK!



K REG MERCEDES 609D LUXURY AX-S MINIBUS-ES, PLS cassette chairlift, 15 moquette seats on tracking, 3 point seat belts, wheelchair tracking, 4 wheelchairs folding front entry doors, saloon heater, very, very low mileages, built by Mellors, choice of 14 vehicles**£24,995 + VAT**
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Finance from £42 p/w



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1989 F MCW METRORIDERS, long wheelbase model with heavy duty underframe, Cummins engine, Allison automatic gearbox, disc brakes all round, fast-flow entrance and up to 31 seats plus 9 standees. Excellent choice.



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1988 E RENAULT S56 MARK II, 23 seat coach, Alexander AM bodywork (1988 model type with high window line and seamless panelling), disc brakes, automatic gearbox, attractive red/grey interior, luggage pen, seat belts, excellent pedigree, very clean vehicle, only one left at just £5,995

1989 F RENAULT S56 MARK II, East Lancs 21 seat coach, Perkins 4 cylinder turbo, automatic gearbox, disc brakes, retarder, price includes retrim in your choice of moquette as well as our usual preparation package, one only £6,995

1988 E IVECO 49.10 TURBODAILY ROBIN HOOD, 19 seat coach, automatic gearbox, beige/orange interior, luggage pen, power door, one only £3,995

1987 D AND E RENAULT S56 MARK II, 19/21 seat coaches, Alexander AM type alloy bodywork, automatic gearboxes, power doors, beige/orange moquette, saloon heaters, good condition, ideal dual purpose vehicles, just four left £4,295 to £4,495 or with retrimmed seats in your choice of the latest moquettes for just £500 extra

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1988 E/F RENAULT S56 MARK II, 25 seat buses, choice of Alexander all aluminium or Northern Counties bodywork, choice of blue/grey, fawn or brown stripe interior, all have automatic gearboxes, power steering, power doors, ticket machine fittings and full soft trim, good choice of very clean, mostly one-owner vehicles from just £4,495

1989 G RENAULT S56 MARK II, Northern Counties 25 seater, auto, one only £6,495

1989 G IVECO 49.10 CARLYLE MARK II, 23 seat bus, manual or automatic from £6,495

1989 F FORD TRANSIT 8/11-SEAT NON PSV PETROL, new MoT, very tidy £2,495

1988 E/F RENAULT S56 MARK II Northern Counties, 25-seaters, choice from £4,995

1988 E/F IVECO 49.10 TURBODAILY, 21 seaters, manual, choice from £4,495

1988 E FREIGHT ROVER SHERPA CARLYLE MARK II, 20 seat minibus, one only £3,495

1988 E RENAULT S56 MARK II ALEXANDER AM-TYPE, 25 seat bus, one only £4,995

1987 E IVECO 49.10 ROBIN HOOD, 25 seaters, manual or auto, choice of three £5,295 each

1987 D MCW METRORIDER, 23 seaters, Cummins or Perkins, choice of 3 £6,995 each

1987 D IVECO 49.10 ROBIN HOOD, 19/21 seaters, manual, wide choice £3,995

1986 C MERCEDES 608D REEVE BURGESS/PMT, 20 seaters, price includes lower body panel, 2 left £5,495

All the above prices include our full preparation package, comprising a new PCV MoT, full mechanical inspection and report with defects rectified, and all necessary body repairs and repanelling. Trade-ins are welcomed, and we can offer finance for any vehicle in stock, subject to status. Big reductions for vehicles sold prior to preparation!

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1988/9 F FREIGHT ROVER SHERPA 350, Crystals 16 seat coach, luggage racks, long MoT

1987 D FREIGHT ROVER CARLYLE MARK I, 20 seat buses with Ford DI engine and Ford MT75 5 speed gearboxes, choice of two

THIS WEEK'S DRIVE-AWAY BARGAINS

1988 E RENAULT S56 MARK II REEVE BURGESS BEAVER, 25 seat bus MoT to December 1997 AUTO GEARBOX, very clean, one only £3,295

1987 D MERCEDES 608D ALEXANDER 20-SEAT BUS, MoT 7/98, taxed November, recent respray in white £3,995

1986 C MERCEDES 608D REEVE BURGESS, 20 seat bus, MoT January 1998, attractive grey/blue interior £3,295

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FREIGHT ROVER 16STR, Diesel (factory finish), PSV plated to Aug 1998, new engine 45,000 miles ago, good tyres, blue, cloth seats, seat belts, good runner/starter 1989 PP, basic PSV but ready for work, taxed £2,200 PLUS VAT

Tel CARDIFF
01222 628282;
After hours 01222 521607
BCB/428/4168/MB

1994 L REG FORD TRANSIT MINIBUSES, L.W.B., new generation, DI Injection, C.O.I.F., P.C.V., various two wheelchair access, semi high roof £11,950 ono

1993 K REG DIESEL MAZDA E2200, 14 seat minibus, wheelchair access, C.O.I.F., P.C.V. Jan '98, high spec. Reduced £5,950 ono

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1992 LDV, choice of seven, all 16 seats, long tests, all factory built & well maintained

1990 MERCEDES 408 12 Seats, Tailift

1988 MERCEDES 811D, 33 Seats, Coach work by Reeve Burgess long test.

1985 MERCEDES 608, 19 seats

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L 94 LDV 400 DIESEL 17 seater factory Diesel Bus. Choice £7,995

L 94 TRANSIT 12 seat Diesel factory minibus. White £8,995

K 93 LDV 200 DIESEL 13 seater Std Bus, seat belts fitted to all forward facing seats. White £5,495

K 93 RENAULT MASTER DIESEL 17 seater Bus. FSH, PAS, includes under floor luggage, M2 high back seats, 3 pointed seat belts, PSV COIF, tinted glass, curtains, etc, etc in cobalt blue £12,495

K 92 TRANSIT 12 seat factory Diesel Minibus, PAS, COIF, PSV etc. White £7,995

K 92 RENAULT 12 seat factory Diesel Minibus. White £6,295

J 92 MIDI 12 seat factory petrol Minibus with 42,000 miles only. White £5,295

H 90 TRANSIT 12 seater factory petrol Minibus. Red £3,995

G 89 VAUXHALL MIDI 9 seater Diesel Bus. White £2,995

D 86 FREIGHT ROVER 300 DIESEL 17 seater PSV Minibus (front entry). White £2,200

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1993 K MERCEDES 410D, 16 seater

1991 J REG LEYLAND DAF, 16 seater with seatbelts

1989 G REG MERCEDES 809D, 26 seater

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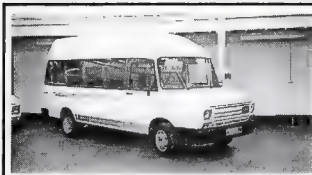


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BCB/428/4946/MB

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BCB/428/4392/MB

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BCB/428/4732/MB

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1987

Freight Rover

18/20 seats, choice of 2, One with Transit engine, and seatbelts, Long MoT's, £1795/£1995

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New Engine / Gearbox. Personal No Plate



2 MERCEDES 612D

24 hi-back seats, covered in moquette retractable lap and
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to match saloon seats, moquette centre panel, full length
luggage rack with moquette base, GRP entrance step,
tinted windows in black metal frame, 2 heavy duty saloon
heaters, 2 full sized quad vents, GRP body skirts and
body covers, dropwell boot, COIF, drivers night blind.....
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LDV Convoy High Spec

Hi roof diesel turbo, PAS, 16 seater hi-spec to include: hi-
back moquette seats, soft carpet trim, moquette centre
panel, top quality lino floor, metal framed window with tint-
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speakers, quadvents, saloon heater, fluorescent interior
lights, wheel trims, COIF **£22,950**

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Hi roof diesel turbo, PAS, 16 hi-back seats, covered in
moquette, soft carpet trim, lino floor, clear glass windows,
stereo radio cassette and four speakers, quadvent,
saloon heater, fluorescent interior lights, wheel trims,
COIF **£21,950**

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Diesel LWB hi-roof, PAS, 15 seater hi spec to include: hi-
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speakers, quadvents, saloon heater, fluorescent interior
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Diesel, 17 Excelite seats covered in moquette, soft cord
carpet trim, lap and diagonal seat restraints, large
recessed step, interior lights, step light, top quality lino
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23 + 6 Standees
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(Discount for Quantity)

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Due to timewasters and tyre kickers, reduced to £14,000 to clear

First to see will buy

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VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE BERMUDA 1981

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£18,750 + VAT

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BCB/428/4550/VO

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FOR SALE

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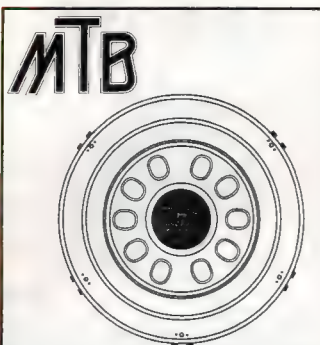
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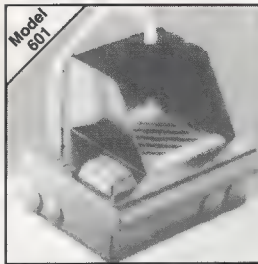
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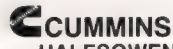
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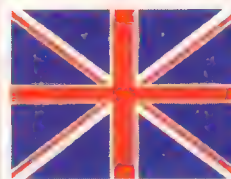
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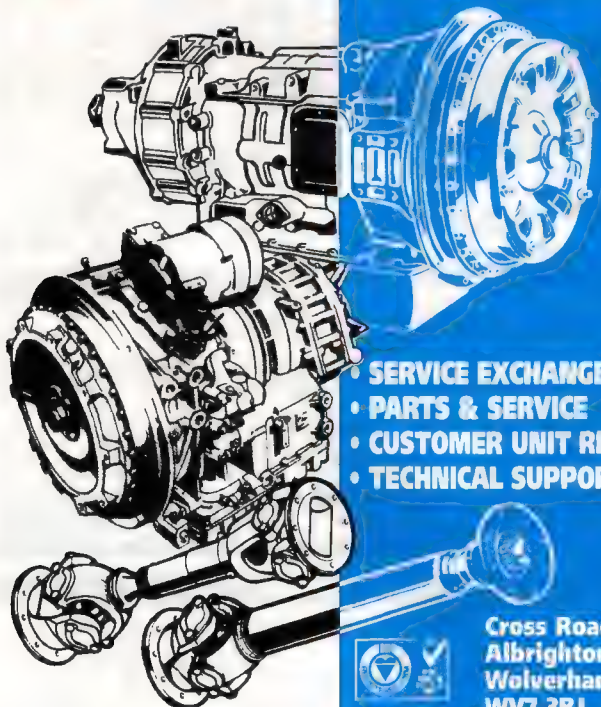
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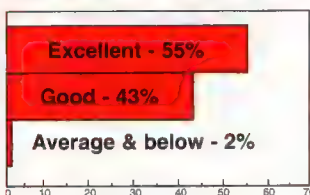
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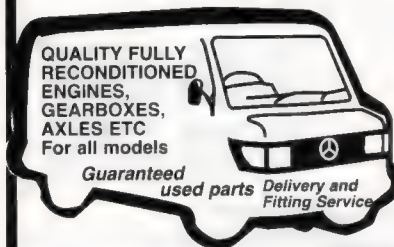
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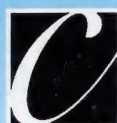
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Fleet Additions

Brijan first

Brijan Tours of Bishops Waltham has taken delivery of its first new full size coach. The Dennis Javelin with Plaxton Premiere 320 55 seat coachwork was supplied by Kirkby Coach & Bus and will be used on a broad range of work including the company's own UK holiday tour programme. The livery on the new coach which has tinted double-glazing uses Brijan's existing colours but in a layout inspired by a Kirkby demonstrator. The business was established in 1990 and now runs 12 vehicles including six touring coaches.



Perry's Optimo

A new Toyota Optimo IV GL 21 seater has been supplied by Salvador Caetano (UK) to Perry's Coaches of Malton in North Yorkshire. The specification of the coach includes recliners, courier seat, power entrance door, tinted side windows with full draw curtains and individual reading lights. Forced air ventilation is also fitted as is Blaupunkt stereo radio/PA/cassette equipment.



Doncaster Crystals

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council has taken delivery of three Ford Transit Challenger wheelchair accessible minicoaches from Crystals Conversions. They will be used to carry passengers to day and education centres around Doncaster. Alec Povey, transport co-ordinator for the Borough Council is seen taking delivery from Ray Lingard and Matthew Skelton from Crystals.



Beulas for Shires Coaches

Recently delivered to Shire Coaches of St Albans in Hertfordshire is an Iveco EuroRider 350 bhp chassis with Beulas coachwork supplied by the A.W. Group of Ratby. The specification for the new addition includes Telma retarder, ABS, air-conditioning and 51 Vogel reclining seats. A courier seat is included as is a rear toilet and continental door. The Beulas coach body also features double glazing.



Axials for Lucketts

Lucketts Travel of Fareham is now operating two Berkhof Axial bodied Dennis Javelins. One is a 12 metre vehicle while the other shown here is built to 10 metres. Thirty eight Vogel reclining seats are fitted to the coach which also has Sutrak air-conditioning, continental door and rear sunken toilet. A courier seat is part of the specification as is a hot water boiler and fridge. A video plus a PA/radio/tape system are additional features. The coaches were supplied by AVE Berkhof.

Products & Services



Back Buddy from Overton UK.

Back Buddy and Clever Lever

Overton UK has launched Back Buddy which the company says is designed to prevent awkward lifting while pulling off heavy hub and brake assemblies. Back Buddy rolls under, bolts on, and rolls out with drum, or the drum and hub assemblies, fully supported. A drip tray catches oil spills, while the hub is securely attached throughout the servicing process. Lift and tilt controls permit the right alignment for reinstalling preventing seal damage. Quick release adapters suit all makes of hubs and brake assemblies. The Back Buddy is made of tubular steel and has pneumatic industrial tyres and ball bearing castors for easy movement across rough or uneven surfaces. It is priced at £595.00 plus delivery and

VAT, and comes with one pair of adapters.

Also available from Overton UK is Clever Lever, a tool which allows a single person to remove and replace a wheel and tyre assemblies weighing up to 130 kgs. The tyre is cradled within tilting brackets enabling the wheel to match the angle of the hub when replacing it on the vehicle. The Clever Lever comes assembled and all moving parts are permanently lubricated and maintenance-free. Two models are available. The MD-22 priced at £99.00 plus delivery and VAT covers tyre diameters from 61cm-92cm while the HD-26 from 92cm-122cm costs £110.00 plus delivery and VAT. Back Buddy is a trade mark and Clever Lever is a registered trade mark.

VDM from JMW Systems

Traffic management equipment manufacturer, JMW Systems has introduced a new on-board intelligent box to help buses communicate and reduce traffic congestion. The box (Vehicle Data Module) communicates with a roadside reader either via a loop in the road and/or through a high security radio modem. Because the transmission can be bi-directional, it can be used to download details of fares collected from the on-board ticket machine, or update on-board display units which keep passengers informed of the vehicles' arrival time. The passenger loading can affect whether the bus is given priority at traffic lights.

JMW Systems include in their range fuel management systems which control, record and report on the issue of

diesel and petrol to vehicles re-fuelling at in-house facilities. Also available are selective vehicle detection systems giving access to secure areas or allowing buses and emergency vehicles to have priority at traffic light junctions, and short haul radio modems which are SCOOT compatible for linking vehicle detection systems to control centres, thus saving installation costs. Passenger transport information systems used to inform passengers waiting at pick up points about impending arrivals can also be used for vehicle location.

More details are available from 20 Whalley Road, Wilpshire, Blackburn, BB1 9PJ. Tel: 01254 249297, Fax: 01254 246884. JMW has also opened a Website at www.jmw-systems.demon.co.uk/

EEC to stock Mondial in UK

European Engine Components have been appointed as UK stockists for OE piston manufacturer Mondial Piston SPA. Part of the Mahle Group, Mondial Piston offer a range of pistons, piston rings and cylinder liners for an extensive range of Iveco commercial vehicles including the Daily.

European Engine Components already stock Mercedes, Volvo, DAF and Scania engine components for commercial vehicles and their range includes alternators,

camshafts, crankshafts, cylinder heads, bearings, engine re-build kits, flywheels, injectors, oil pumps, pistons, piston rings, starter motors, turbochargers, valves and water pumps. Local same day deliveries are available in West Yorkshire with guaranteed next day, nationwide. Further information is available by telephoning 01977 604140 or faxing 01977 668167. Alternatively the company is available by calling 07000 PISTON PLUS.



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